

Examiner: William P. Neuder
Appl. No. 10/754,022
Response dated Nov 22, 2004
Reply to office action of Oct. 21, 2004

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

Please cancel claims 1-5 as filed, without prejudice, and maintain claims 6 and 7 in the case.

Please add the following claims:

8. (New) A system for continuous mud circulation while making jointed pipe connections in an oil and gas well, which comprises:

- a. a first drilling string defining a first annulus therein;
- b. a plurality of casings positioned around the drill string to define a plurality of annuli therebetween;
- c. fluid flowing down some of the plurality of annuli and returning up at least one common return annulus, for defining a seamless circulation environment within the system during jointed pipe connections.

9. (New) The system in claim 8, wherein the seamless circulation environment comprises a downhole environment in the well bore having a substantially constant equivalent circulating pressure (ECD), without associated pressure spikes.

10. (New) The system in claim 8, wherein the oil and gas well may be a straight, directional, horizontal or multilateral well.

11. (New) The system in claim 10, wherein the system may include multi-lateral components extending outward from the straight, directional, horizontal or multilateral wells.

12. (New) A method for continuous mud circulation while making jointed pipe connections in an oil and gas well, which comprises:

- a. a first drilling string defining a first annulus therein;
- b. a plurality of casings positioned around the drill string to define a plurality of annuli therebetween so that fluid flowing down some of the plurality of annuli and returning up at least one common return annulus, does so in a downhole environment in the well bore at a near constant equivalent circulating pressure (ECD), eliminating associated pressure spikes associated

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with stopping or re-starting the circulation environment.

13. (New) In a system providing continuous mud circulation while making jointed pipe connections in an oil and gas well, the system having a first drill string defining a first annulus, and a plurality of casings positioned around the drill string to define a plurality of annuli therebetween, so that fluid flowing down at least some of the plurality of annuli and returning at least up the one common return annulus defines a seamless circulation environment within the system which having a substantially constant equivalent circulating pressure without associated pressure spikes.--

14. (New) A system for continuous and seamless mud circulation while making jointed pipe connections in an oil and gas well, which comprises:

- a. a first drilling string defining a first annulus therein;
- b. a plurality of casings positioned around the drill string to define a plurality of annuli therebetween;
- c. fluid flowing down some of the plurality of annuli and returning up at least one common return annulus, for defining a seamless circulation environment within the system during jointed pipe connections.

15. The system in claim 14, wherein the fluid further comprises a gas or a liquid, or a combination of gas and liquid.

16. The system in claim 15, where gas would comprise air, nitrogen or natural gas.